

WATERTOWN PLANNING BOARD

DATE: April 13, 2022 PLACE: City Council Chamber TIME: 7:00 PM COMMENCED: 7:00 PM

PURPOSE OF MEETING: Public Hearing

Regular Monthly Meeting

PRESENT: Jeff Brown, Chairman; Payson Whitney; Janet Buck; Jason Cohen; Abigail Hammett
Ingrid Marchesano, Clerk to the Board; Gideon Schreiber, Senior Planner; Larry Field,
Senior Planner

ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS

Jason Cohen motioned to approve Minutes of 3/9/2022 Planning Board meeting.

Janet Buck seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0 In favor

OTHER BUSINESS

Community Preservation Committee Update

Jason Cohen, as a member of the CPC, this is an update. We have received a first round of applications last fall. After reviewing the projects, 2 made it to the final round. Funding for improvements to the Irving Park were approved. Also funding for restoration of painting in the lobby of City Hall. The CPC will recommend the approval of the 2 projects to the City Council. The Affordable Housing project needs further review. The CPC is working on refining the application process for FY'2023. Presently the funds balance is \$ 12,871,632.00, the total of projects is \$300,000. The State match is very generous. We are proposing to hire affordable housing consultants. Due to the pandemic, we are not having in person meetings yet.

Jeff Brown, why did many of the applications not make it? Do you contact other Towns?

Abigail Hammett, is there a plan to publicize the program?

Jason Cohen, some were not acceptable but were encouraged to come back. There are various approaches to get more applications. This is a relatively new program, the Watertown coordinator is Lanae Handy who has contacted other Towns. The CPC plan is on the City's website, all comments are welcome.

Gideon Schreiber, it is a good plan to be shared with community members. A road map to get new projects.

Abigail Hammett, I will not participate in the next project on the agenda – 485 Arsenal Street. Boylston Properties is a client of my company.

PUBLIC HEARING

ZONING AMENDMENTS

- **485 Arsenal Street – BP Arsenal Group, LLC**

Andrew Copelotti, Boylston Properties, the final approval for Arsenal Yards that included all proposed signage was received on November 8, 2017. It focused on retail, lab tenants, vehicular traffic, etc. We now have different tenants, vehicular traffic changed, retail signage is based on their frontage.

Laura Portney, PCA, we need to reevaluate the signage, the special permit did not envision the Life Science uses within Arsenal Yards, specifically buildings at 100 and 500 Forge Road. All banner sizes still apply. We are asking to increase the banner size from 250 to 300 s.f. maximum. It will proportionately fit within the height of the buildings and more visible to vehicular traffic. In addition to tenant signage we are adding monument signage.

Jason Cohen, who is the largest tenant on the site?

Andrew Copelotti, we have 70,000 s.f. of space, 2 tenants, for a total of at 500 Forge Road. 100 Forge will have several monument signs in front of the building.

Janet Buck, the sign shown can be seen from far away. More effective within the Arsenal Yards would be lower signs.

Andrew Copelotti, a good view is going east on Arsenal Street, also from Coolidge and Arlington Streets. There is a chance that we might have one tenant in each building and that would give them flexibility in the future. There might be a brand-new business, life science is in favor now.

Jeff Brown, the application states that this will be a minor amendment? How many businesses are new?

Andrew Copelotti, many of businesses are already here, these two buildings are coming with new businesses.

Payson Whitney, will the signage be lit at night?

Laura Portney, they will all have to comply with the Sign Master Plan.

Gideon Schreiber, the plan allows for up to two attached/detached signs per tenant. Based on the square footage at 100 Forge up to 4/1200 s.f., 500 Forge up to 8/2400 s.f...

Andrew Copelotti, no signage will face Greenough Blvd. We do not know how many tenants will occupy the building in the future. Not every tenant will have the opportunity to put up a sign. We are looking for flexibility. We are very protective of the buildings.

Jason Cohen, can we attach condition that there cannot be more than 4 signs on 1 façade?

Gideon Schreiber, page four of staff report allows more flexibility. We are not looking at specific sign, each sign will be reviewed by Boylston and us. They are asking for flexibility only for 100 and 500 Forge. Staff made recommendation based on that.

Andrew Copelotti, we are using 2 sign companies, many signs on the site are already approved, only about 60% are installed. We are very thoughtful about each sign. We are hoping to have tenants for each building by the end of the year.

Janet Buck, I am disappointed that signage is not allowed on the façade facing Greenough Blvd. Tonight, they are asking for monument signage at 100 Forge. Can we add language that would let Planning Staff review banners, etc.?

Gideon Schreiber, we have allowed more flexibility in this district that includes signage on mechanical equipment/penthouse. Such signage is not allowed in the rest of the City. We only allow projecting banners, they have to be proportional. We are not talking about Greenough tonight.

Laura Portney, this signage is specifically for lab buildings at Arsenal Yards only. The signage on top is better for lab space, retail space signage is different.

Jason Cohen, I would vote to un strike on page 4 of the staff report YES signs on mechanical penthouse at 500 Forge, up to 3 signs maximum, based on square footage – 5 more.

Payson Whitney, instead of saying per tenant, 2 edits:

- Each tenant may be allowed up to 2
- After 500 Forge “up to 3 signs
- No projecting signs on 100 Forge

Payson Whitney motioned that the Planning Board approve the amendment as described in the attached decision.

Janet Buck seconded the motion.

VOTE: 4-0

In favor

Abigail Hammett absent

Jeff Brown adjourned the meeting at 8:35 pm.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 8:35 PM MINUTES APPROVED: _____

For more detailed Minutes see the DVD dated 4/13/2022 available in the DCD&P office.